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spherical calotte, and also wooden plates. Sometimes also simple leaves are used as plates, unless the food is served in the cooking pots.

The whole meal is spread on the ground. [166]

The man squats on his mat and dips leisurely in the dishes with his hand, moving from one to another according to his taste.

The meal is always eaten in silence. Even when several friends eat together, they never talk during the meal.

After the meal the natives carefully wash their hands and teeth and rinse out their mouths several times.

Beverages

Water is the only beverage they drink at mealtime, and they use it quite rarely. If they do not have a wooden or earthenware cup, they use part of a calabash or simply a leaf rolled into a little cone.

Fig. 83. Water Carrier.

Water usually comes from a spring near the village. The natives use river water only when it is quite clear. The women and children have the task of fetching water, a chore which is often quite hard. I visited many villages located along or near the river, whose source of drinking water was 20 to 30 minutes away.

At certain hours of the day and more especially in the morning as the sun first comes up, the women and children set out, a calabash or water jug balanced on their heads, to fetch the supply for the day.

Water is kept in large calabashes or earthenware jugs, sheltered from the sun in a corner of the hut.

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The shape of these water jugs varies considerably according to the region, and some of them even seem to us to be characteristic of certain ethnic groups. [141]

Among the western Ilenbo and Bonfumongo, the spherical shape with straight neck predominates.

Among the Mokoma of Bokala-Wombali and the eastern Bonfumongo, the shape is distinctly spherical, with a very small, funnel-like neck that is usually no more than one or two centimeters high. This form is entirely new. Fortunately, we were able to collect several specimens. The Bonkie of the Stanley Pool region use a water jug that resembles the carafes imported from Europe. This shape is particularly common in the Leopoldville-Kinshasa region.

From Mushie to the region of the Bonkaka-Bolobo, including the Wadia and Tumbe, the body of the water jug consists of two parts joined at a sharp or slightly rounded edge. The bottom part is shaped like a spherical calotte, the upper part has the shape of a truncated cone. The decoration is very symmetrical. Lightly marked parallel circles cover the conical part of the body and sometimes the neck. The latter is very long, usually wider at its base than at the top and slightly swollen in the middle. This interesting shape is also found, though more rarely, among the Mowangove. Among this tribe we encountered another form, no less interesting and very little known up to the present time. The chief characteristics of this form are the flat bottom, a cylindrical, more or less symmetrical body, rounded edges, and a neck in the shape of a wide funnel.

[53]

Among the Bobale of the northeast, the Baloss-Batete, the Ipanga-Batitu, and the Bokala-Yaelima, the water jug has a spherical body and a straight neck. This same shape is also found among the Benkutu [Wankumbu] and Basongo-Meno of the Bena Dibele-Kole region.

Let us note, however, that in the region of the Ipanga-Yaelima, water jugs are relatively rare; the natives commonly use large calabashes, very often provided with a handle and a leg of rattan or bamboo.

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Other than with meals, the natives drink water only to slake their thirst. Each time the porters come to a river, they make it a point to bathe in it and to refresh themselves. [146]